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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6890  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 8145

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - DAVID FIRESTEIN  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN SEVERING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH COSTA  
RICA, U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage June 8 on Taiwan's cutting diplomatic ties with Costa Rica after the latter decided to establish relations with China; on former President Lee Teng-hui's visit to Japan's Yasukuni Shrine Thursday; on the cooperation between Taiwan and U.S. authorities in raiding a human trafficking ring in Taiwan; and on other local issues. In terms of editorials and commentaries, most papers editorialized on Taiwan's cutting diplomatic ties with Costa Rica. An editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily," an analysis in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times," and an editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" all criticized the Chen Shui-bian administration for its foreign policy and for the deterioration in Taiwan-U.S. relations. With regard to U.S.-China-Taiwan relations, an editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" urged the DPP government to listen to the warnings given by the American Chamber of Commerce in its annual white paper. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News," however, urged the United States to compel China to abide by the universal standards for human rights and support Taiwan's bid to join the World Health Organization. End summary.

## ¶2. Taiwan Severing Diplomatic Ties with Costa Rica

A) "Taiwan Has Violated a Big Strategic Taboo in Terms of Its Foreign Relations"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] editorialized (6/8):

"... The fact that the United States failed to support Taiwan in Central and South America was a misfortune caused by the Bian authorities' maxing out the credit of Taiwan-U.S. relations. Taiwan must not blame anyone. The truth lies very clearly before us: When Taiwan-U.S. relations get cold, Taiwan will not be able to compete with China diplomatically. If the island does not want to concede, it had better be prepared to sever ties with all its allies. ..."

B) "Bian's Cutthroat Diplomacy; Costa Rica Becomes the First Domino"

Journalist Lin Shui-ling noted in an analysis in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (6/8):

"... Chen Shui-bian's foreign policies lately have all been focused on winning the 2008 election, fortifying Taiwan's defense works and drawing a clear line with Beijing. He lashed out at China's suppression on the one hand, and in the meantime, he launched an all-out campaign for name change, the writing of a new constitution, and even a bid to join the World Health Organization and the United Nation under the name Taiwan. With the rising flames of war,

relations between both sides of the Taiwan Strait deteriorate gradually, and even the United States cannot stop A-Bian's determination. ...

"Following the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Costa Rica, Chen has extended the battlefield to the UN General Assembly, which will be held in New York in September, and intends to apply for membership for the UN using the name Taiwan. Even though the U.S. State Department has made it very clear that it will not support [Taiwan's bid], Bian remains firm in pushing for it by spending a tremendous amount of money on lobbying by public relations companies and on holding video conferences to build up momentum. Is it any wonder some people are worried about whether Costa Rica will become the first domino [in Central America]? ...

"The United States has played a very important role behind the fact that Taiwan, given the big gap between its national strength and that of China, has been able to maintain more than 20 diplomatic allies over the past few years. Be it Central America, also known as 'the backyard of the United States,' the South Pacific island nations which are situated in the strategic position of the Pacific chain, or the African area, the United States has helped Taiwan in many ways, because it does not want to see Beijing lure away all [Taiwan's] allies.

"But in the wake of Bian's making it clear that he did not care about the United States and would continue his policy of confronting Beijing, Washington also started to take a stand -- first it penalized Taiwan by saying there would be no talks for the free trade agreement, and it remains to be seen whether Washington will further alter its policy of supporting Taiwan to maintain an appropriate number of diplomatic allies. ..."

C) "Is Costa Rica the First Domino?"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000]  
RICA, U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

editorialized (6/8):

"... Beijing easily snatching away Costa Rica [from Taiwan] revealed the effects of its thorough planning in the region. Beijing's diplomatic approach is to calculate every move carefully, something that Taiwan's thoughtless showman diplomacy cannot compare with. The reason why Beijing has yet to make a big move to lure away Taiwan's major allies in Central America and the Caribbean was because it has scruples about the United States' feeling about its 'backyard.' In this regard, the breaking of ties with Costa Rica might not have happened at this moment if China had not sought revenge for Taiwan's luring away of St. Lucia. The Bian administration has finally reaped the bitter results of its diplomatic provocations. ..."

### 13. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "AmCham's Warning Shouldn't Go Unheeded"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (6/8):

"The American Chamber of commerce (AmCham) in its latest annual White Paper, pointed out that Taiwan's economy has fallen behind other Asian tigers. The opinion deserves to be noticed by all those who are concerned about Taiwan's future. ... Alleging that Taiwan still has many key assets, including its strength in high-tech manufacturing, that could enable it to continue to be a dynamic player, [AmCham President Jane] Hwang added that the country's future success will depend on 'whether the political and popular will is present to tackle some underlying systematic problems.' Such a will has been absent for a long time and is unlikely to return as long as the DPP is in power. The party is always preoccupied with how it can defeat its political rivals and seldom thinks about problems relating to the island's economy."

B) "Democracy - the Only Way to 'Contain' China"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (6/8):

"... China has been a hot topic of many discussions and seminars on security issues worldwide in recent months for the very good reason that the evaluation of various governments and parties of the direction and character of China's rise as a possible challenge to the international order shaped by the United States will directly influence the strategic positioning and arrangements of the key countries in defining their own relations with the U.S. and the PRC. Clearly, the U.S., including the Republican administration of U.S. President George W. Bush, sees the PRC as a potential threat in the future, but it treats Beijing as a partner for short-term economic and political interests, especially on issues such as curbing North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"There are unavoidable tensions between short-term priorities and the long-term perspective as Washington's short-term arrangements with the PRC will tend to encourage other influential countries to adopt friendly policies toward Beijing, a trend that would favor granting China a 'constructive role' in the international arena and thus perhaps enhance its potential threat to U.S. hegemony. So far, the Bush II administration has shown considerable awkwardness in managing the adjustment between the long-term and short-term interests, including in its management of the triangular relations between an authoritarian PRC, a newly democratic Taiwan and the U.S. itself. Although evidently identifying its role as a world policeman against 'terror,' the Bush administration has exhausted the U.S.' diplomatic, military and even economic capital by trying to deal with a series of regional and global crises largely through reliance on force.

"By treating the question of 'terrorism' primarily in military terms as a 'war' conducted through invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. has had to pay a high strategic price by inviting Beijing to cooperate in helping Washington resolve crises such as the North Korean nuclear controversy or even Iraq itself. By engaging in short-term demonstrations of 'hard power' at the expense of cultivation of long-term 'soft power,' Washington is undermining its own international leadership which is not based only on material strength but on the U.S.' past reputation as a promoter of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and a stable global order. Washington's current obsession with military power and domestic security as crystallized in Bush's proclaimed 'war on terror' has led U.S. decision-makers to neglect the primacy of the moral obligation to protect human ideals and the potential damage of its loss of moral leadership.

"The adoption by the current U.S. administration of a policy of appeasement toward the PRC will only worsen matters by reinforcing RICA, U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Washington's allies' incentives to accommodate themselves to Beijing's substandard and bullying behavior in the international arena, and by confounding the moral standard for the code of conduct in the international arena. Taiwan's helplessness in apply for the entry or even 'meaningful participation' in the World Health Organization has revealed the power of the PRC's tactics of bullying and the weakness of the moral fabric and will of international society reminiscent of the tragic and costly failure of the world's democracies to stand up to Nazi Germany in the 1930s, symbolized by the betrayal of Republican Spain and democratic Czechoslovakia. ...

"Instead of giving into the PRC on all fronts, the best way for the U.S. to rebuild its global image and 'soft power' is to display its own respect for universal standards of morality by facing up to the worsening crises of global warmings and global poverty, finding a way to end the ongoing war in Iraq and closing the concentration camp for hundreds of alleged 'terrorists' at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The U.S. has to lead as well as join the world community in compelling the PRC to abide by the universal standards for human rights at home and abroad. We believe Washington can send important messages to Beijing by supporting Taiwan's entry into humanitarian international organizations such as the World Health Organization instead of bowing to Beijing's pressure. ...."

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